

Appl. No. : Unknown
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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method for drying soil in preparation for analysis ~~including~~ comprising the steps of:

- (a) increasing the surface area of the soil;
- (b) forcing a substantially inert gas through the soil; and
- (c) subjecting the soil to an elevated temperature that does not exceed approximately 50°C.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the sample is prepared for analysis after approximately 1 hour of processing via steps (a) to (c).

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the sample is prepared for analysis after approximately 20 minutes of processing via steps (a) to (c).

4. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ of claim 1 wherein the moisture content after steps (a) to (c) is less than approximately 9% wt.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said increasing the surface area of the soil as claimed in any of the above claims wherein the increase in surface area during step (a) is completed by comprises breaking the soil down into smaller particles by mechanical motion.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said increasing the surface area of the soil results in a ~~as claimed in any of the above claims wherein the mean particle size after step (a) is~~ of substantially less than 10mm.

7. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ of claim 1 wherein ~~the~~ said substantially inert gas of step (b) is air.

8. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ of claim 1 wherein said substantially inert gas of step (b) is free of moisture ~~free~~.

9. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ of claim 1 wherein said substantially inert gas of step (b) is conditioned via dehumidification.

10. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ of claim 1 wherein ~~the~~ said substantially inert gas of step (b) is conditioned by use of a desiccating agent to remove moisture from the gas.

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11. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ of claim 1 wherein the substantially inert gas of step (b) is forced across the soil particles produced from step (a).

12. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 11 wherein said forcing a substantially inert gas through the soil comprises the use of fan forced substantially inert gas ~~the inert gas is fan forced.~~

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 ~~or claim 12~~ wherein the flow of the forced substantially inert gas ~~flow~~ is less than 4 m/s.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11 ~~as claimed in any of claims 11 to 13~~ wherein the flow of the forced substantially inert gas ~~flow~~ is approximately 2 m/s.

15. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ wherein the elevated temperature during step (c) ~~to which the soil is elevated~~ is high enough to allow sample drying without impacting on the chemical and/or physical properties to be measured.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ wherein the elevated temperature during step (c) ranges from approximately 20°C to 50°C.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ wherein the elevated temperature during step (c) ranges from approximately 30°C to 40°C.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ wherein the elevated temperature during step (c) is approximately 35°C.

19. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ wherein step (c) comprises the use of drying equipment that is preheated ~~the drying equipment is preheated before step (c).~~

20. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~as claimed in any of the above claims~~ wherein the method includes a further step (d) of further comprising:

(d) moving the soil.

21. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 20 wherein the particles remain moving for substantially all of the drying time.

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22. (Currently Amended) An assembly for drying of soil comprising:

(a) an inert gas supply device which is capable of forcing inert gas through a soil sample; and

(b) a heating element which is capable of subjecting the soil to an elevated temperature of less than approximately 50°C.

23. (Currently Amended) The assembly ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 22 wherein the assembly further includes a soil crusher device which is capable of increasing the surface area of the soil.

24. (Currently Amended) The assembly ~~as claimed in~~ of claim 22 ~~or claim 23~~ where the assembly further includes a device capable of keeping the soil in motion.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Cancelled)

27. (New) The assembly of claim 23 further comprising a device capable of keeping the soil in motion.

28. (New) The method of claim 12 wherein flow of the forced substantially inert gas is approximately 2 m/s.

29. (New) The method of claim 13 wherein the flow of the forced substantially inert gas is approximately 2 m/s.

30. (New) The method of claim 12 wherein the flow of the forced substantially inert gas is less than 4 m/s.